

WHAT IS CLAIMED AS NEW AND DESIRED TO BE SECURED BY LETTERS

PATENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS:

1. A computer network implemented system for implementing product sampling programs, comprising:

a central computer system;

a communications medium over which the central computer system can communicate with each one of a plurality of retailer computer systems;

wherein said central computer system is programmed to:

determine, based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data, first offer data constituting a first offer for a first retailer to participate in a sampling program;

determine, based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data, second offer data constituting a second offer for a second retailer to participate in a sampling program;

transmit said first offer data to a first retailer computer system of said plurality of retailer computer systems;

transmit said second offer data to a second retailer computer system of said plurality of retailer computer systems;

receive from said first retailer computer system first retailer consumer profile data comprising CIDs of customers of said first retailer;

receive from said second retailer computer system second retailer consumer profile data comprising CIDs of customers of said second retailer;

determine from said first retailer consumer profile data, first retailer selected CIDs;

determine from said second retailer consumer profile data, second retailer selected CIDs;

wherein said first retailer selected CIDs are CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy consumer profile criteria data, wherein said consumer profile criteria are based at least in part upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data;

wherein said second retailer selected CIDs are CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy consumer profile criteria, wherein said consumer profile criteria are based at least in part upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data;

communicate instructions how to deliver sample products to consumers associated with said first retailer selected CIDs and said second retailer selected CIDs.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein said central computer system is further programmed to:

receive from said first retailer computer system first retailer offer response data indicating whether a first retailer has accept, rejected, or counter offered said first offer;

receive from said second retailer computer system second retailer offer response data indicating whether a second retailer has accept, rejected, or counter offered said second offer;

3. The system of claim 1 wherein said central computer system is further programmed to:

receive from said first one of said retailer computer systems first retailer consumer profile data in a first data exchange data transmission format and interpret that data based upon predetermined specification of said first one of said retailer computer systems' first data exchange data transmission format; and

receive from said second one of said retailer computer systems second retailer consumer profile data in a second data exchange data transmission format and interpret that data based upon predetermined specification of said second one of said retailer computer systems' second data exchange data transmission format.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein said central computer system is further programmed to:

determine based upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data and retailer identification data, offer data constituting different criteria to different retailers.

5. The system of claim 1 wherein said central computer system is further programmed to:

determine based upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data and

fulfillment house availability data, offer data constituting said first offer.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein said central computer system is further programmed to:

if said first offer has been counter offered, determine whether to accept said counter offer based upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data, and, if said determination is to accept said counter offer, then to communicate that acceptance to said first one of said retailer computer systems.

7. The system of claim 1 wherein said central computer system is further programmed to:

transmit to said first retailer computer system consumer profile criteria data containing first retailer consumer profile criteria and a prompt to said first retailer computer system to transmit to the central computer system consumer profile data meeting said first retailer consumer profile criteria.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein said central computer system is further programmed to:

receive consumer profile data meeting said first retailer consumer profile criteria; and  
determine CIDs from said first retailer consumer profile data that are associated with consumer profile data that meets additional consumer profile criteria, wherein said additional consumer profile criteria are in addition to consumer profile criteria transmitted to said first retailer computer system.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein said additional consumer profile criteria is retailer dependent.

10. The system of claim 8 wherein said additional consumer profile criteria contains consumer demographics criteria.

11. The system of claim 8 wherein said additional consumer profile criteria contains consumer purchase history criteria.

12. The system of claim 1 further comprising a manufacturer computer system and wherein said central computer system is programmed to:

receive from said manufacturer computer system manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data defining a request for said central computer system to solicit contracts to implement a sampling program with retailers.

13. The system of claim 1 wherein said a central computer system is programmed to:

determine CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy consumer profile criteria data, wherein said consumer profile criteria data is based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data.

14. The system of claim 1 further comprising said plurality of retailer computer systems, and wherein said first retailer computer system is programmed to determine CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy criteria contained in consumer profile criteria data transmitted by said central computer system to said first retailer computer system, wherein said consumer profile criteria data is based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data.

15. The system of claim 1 further comprising an analytics unit for analyzing data to determine CIDs meeting criteria contained in consumer profile criteria data, in communication with said central computer system.

16. The system of claim 1 further comprising a master database, said master database storing (1) manufacturer promotional sample product offer criteria and (2) consumer profile data.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein said manufacturer promotional sample product offer criteria contains one or more of (1) consumer profile criteria data, (2) sample product timing criteria data, (3) manufacturer post promotional product sales goals data, (4) post promotional product sales data, (5) pre promotional product sales data, (6) fulfillment criteria data, and (7) manufacturer contract terms criteria data.

18. The system of claim 16 wherein said consumer profile data contains (1) CIDs in association with one or more of (2) consumer address data, (3) consumer demographic data, and (4) consumer purchase history data.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein said consumer purchase history data contains at least one of date and values of each consumer purchase, identification of items purchased, dates on which items were each purchased, location of each purchase, time-of-day of each purchase, frequency of each purchase, recency of each purchase, and frequencies of purchases of different brands of competing good.

20. The system of claim 1 further comprising means for generating print files for printing delivery paperwork.

21. The system of claim 1 wherein said first offer data contains consumer profile criteria data.

22. The system according to claim 1 further comprising said first retailer computer system and a first retailer purchase history database associated with said first retailer computer system, wherein said first offer data contains first offer consumer profile criteria data containing first offer consumer profile criteria, and wherein said first retailer computer system is programmed to respond to receipt of said first offer data by transmitting to said central computer system consumer profile data containing records for consumers whose consumer profile data satisfies said first offer consumer profile criteria.

23. A computer network implemented method for implementing product sampling programs, comprising the steps of:

determining in a central computer system, based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data, first offer data constituting a first offer for a first retailer to participate in a sampling program;

determining in said central computer system, based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data, second offer data constituting a second offer for a second retailer to participate in a sampling program;

transmitting from said central computer system over a communications medium said first offer data to a first retailer computer system of a plurality of retailer computer systems;

transmitting from said central computer system over said communications medium said second offer data to a second retailer computer system of said plurality of retailer

computer systems;

receiving from said first retailer computer system at said central computer system first retailer consumer profile data comprising CIDs of customers of said first retailer;

receiving from said second retailer computer system at said central computer system second retailer consumer profile data comprising CIDs of customers of said second retailer;

determining at said central computer system from said first retailer consumer profile data, first retailer selected CIDs;

determining at said central computer system from said second retailer consumer profile data, second retailer selected CIDs;

wherein said first retailer selected CIDs are CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy consumer profile criteria, wherein said consumer profile criteria are based at least in part upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data;

wherein said second retailer selected CIDs are CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy consumer profile criteria data, wherein said consumer profile criteria are based at least in part upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data;

communicating instructions how to deliver sample products to consumers associated with said first retailer selected CIDs and said second retailer selected CIDs.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:

receiving at said central computer system from said first retailer computer system first retailer offer response data indicating whether a first retailer has accept, rejected, or counter offered said first offer;

receiving at said central computer system from said second retailer computer system second retailer offer response data indicating whether a second retailer has accept, rejected, or counter offered said second offer;

25. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:

receiving from said first one of said retailer computer systems first retailer consumer profile data in a first data exchange data transmission format and interpreting that data based upon predetermined specification of said first one of said retailer computer systems' first data

exchange data transmission format; and

receiving from said second one of said retailer computer systems second retailer consumer profile data in a second data exchange data transmission format and interpreting that data based upon predetermined specification of said second one of said retailer computer systems' second data exchange data transmission format.

26. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:

determining at the central computer system, based upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data and retailer identification data, offer data constituting different criteria to different retailers.

27. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:

determining at the central computer system, based upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data and fulfillment house availability data, offer data constituting said first offer.

28. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:

if said first offer has been counter offered, determining whether to accept said counter offer based upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data, and, if said determination is to accept said counter offer, then communicating that acceptance to said first one of said retailer computer systems.

29. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:

transmitting from said central computer system to said first retailer computer system consumer profile criteria data containing first retailer consumer profile criteria and a prompt to said first retailer computer system to transmit to the central computer system consumer profile data meeting said first retailer consumer profile criteria.

30. The method of claim 29 further comprising the steps of:

receiving at the central computer system consumer profile data meeting said first retailer consumer profile criteria; and

determining at the central computer system CIDs from said first retailer consumer profile data that are associated with consumer profile data that meets additional consumer

profile criteria, wherein said additional consumer profile criteria are in addition to consumer profile criteria transmitted to said first retailer computer system.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein said additional consumer profile criteria is retailer dependent.

32. The method of claim 30 wherein said additional consumer profile criteria contains consumer demographics criteria.

33. The method of claim 30 wherein said additional consumer profile criteria contains consumer purchase history criteria.

34. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:  
receiving at said central computer system from a manufacturer computer system manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data defining a request for said central computer system to solicit contracts to implement a sampling program with retailers.

35. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:  
determining at the central computer system CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy consumer profile criteria data, wherein said consumer profile criteria data is based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data.

36. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:  
determining at said first retailer computer system CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy criteria contained in consumer profile criteria data transmitted by said central computer system to said first retailer computer system, wherein said consumer profile criteria data is based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data.

37. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of  
analyzing in an analytics unit in communication with said central computer system, data to determine CIDs meeting criteria contained in consumer profile criteria data.

38. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of:  
storing in a master database (1) manufacturer promotional sample product offer criteria and (2) consumer profile data.



39. The method of claim 38 wherein said manufacturer promotional sample product offer criteria contains one or more of (1) consumer profile criteria data, (2) sample product timing criteria data, (3) manufacturer post promotional product sales goals data, (4) post promotional product sales data, (5) pre promotional product sales data, (6) fulfillment criteria data, and (7) manufacturer contract terms criteria data.

40. The method of claim 38 wherein said consumer profile data contains (1) CIDs in association with one or more of (2) consumer address data, (3) consumer demographic data, and (4) consumer purchase history data.

41. The method of claim 40 wherein said consumer purchase history data contains at least one of date and value of consumer purchases, identification of items purchased, dates on which items were each purchased, location of each purchase, time-of-day of each purchase, frequency of each purchase, recency of each purchase, and frequencies of purchases of different brands of competing good.

42. The method of claim 23 further comprising the step of generating a file for printing delivery paperwork.

43. The method of claim 23 wherein said first offer data contains consumer profile criteria data.

44. The method of claim 23 further comprising the step of:  
transmitting, in response to receipt by said first retailer computer system of first offer consumer profile criteria data containing first offer consumer profile criteria, from said first retailer computer system to said central computer system, consumer profile data containing records from a first retailer purchase history database associated with said first retailer computer system of consumers whose consumer profile data satisfies said first offer consumer profile criteria.

45. A computer program product for programming a central computer system to implement product sampling programs, comprising:  
code for programming a central computer system to:  
determine, based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria

.data, first offer data constituting a first offer for a first retailer to participate in a sampling program;

determine, based at least in part on manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data, second offer data constituting a second offer for a second retailer to participate in a sampling program;

transmit said first offer data to a first retailer computer system of said plurality of retailer computer systems;

transmit said second offer data to a second retailer computer system of said plurality of retailer computer systems;

receive from said first retailer computer system first retailer consumer profile data comprising CIDs of customers of said first retailer;

receive from said second retailer computer system second retailer consumer profile data comprising CIDs of customers of said second retailer;

determine from said first retailer consumer profile data, first retailer selected CIDs;  
determine from said second retailer consumer profile data, second retailer selected CIDs;

wherein said first retailer selected CIDs are CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy consumer profile criteria data, wherein said consumer profile criteria are based at least in part upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data;

wherein said second retailer selected CIDs are CIDs having data associated with them that satisfy consumer profile criteria, wherein said consumer profile criteria are based at least in part upon said manufacturer promotional sample product criteria data;

communicate instructions how to deliver sample products to consumers associated with said first retailer selected CIDs and said second retailer selected CIDs.